

The Green New Deal could take the form of a bus

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These statistics come from [Common Space in Scotland](#) this morning, but I strongly suspect that they would be consistent in England and Wales as well:

The new Transport Scotland statistics cover 2017

- * New data shows fall in bus passenger use by 7.5 per cent over the past five years, while fares are up 18 per cent over the same period of time*
- * The number of motor vehicles reached its highest ever level, with two-thirds saying they travelled to work by car or van*
- * Transport is the biggest contributor to Scotland's carbon emissions, and emission levels have remained static since 1990*
- * Environmentalists and opposition parties call for public and community owned bus networks to be included in "timid" Transport Bill*
- * Transport Secretary said he continued to be "concerned" about bus usage falling, but that the Transport Bill would help address this*

As they note:

Environmentalists have said that transport statistics published today must be a wake up call for politicians to tackle the chronic decline in bus usage, the number one mode of public transport in Scotland.

The Transport Scotland statistics show bus passenger numbers have fallen by 7.5 per cent over the past five years, while the number of motor vehicles reached its highest level ever in Scotland at three million.

I would add a twist. People often ask how a Green New Deal can be delivered locally. This issue explains part of my answer, which is deal with your buses.

The biggest problem in UK transport, and the reason why so many rely on the car is the

'last mile problem' i.e. how you get from home to the station, or to town where the long distance coach is, or wherever. Some would, of course, say that's what taxis are for, but I use them once in a blue moon. They'd also say that was what the bicycle was invented for, and as someone often found atop one I have some sympathy. But for a great many reasons they are not for everyone and everywhere.

I use buses a great deal in London. I like them. At home I hardly ever use them at all. They don't go where I want. And they are too infrequent. The result is many resort to the car. And as Common Space point out, cost is also a factor for many.

If emissions are to be tackled then the bus issue has to be tackled. There have to be more of them, more often, on better routes, at lower cost, with subsidy provided if required to transform local transport with the result that the last mile problem can be solved. That's what the Green New Deal would look like. It may not be big, bold or that costly. It may not deliver massive political reward. But it would create real change. And that's what matters.